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THE ADVENTURES OF BAYOU BILLY

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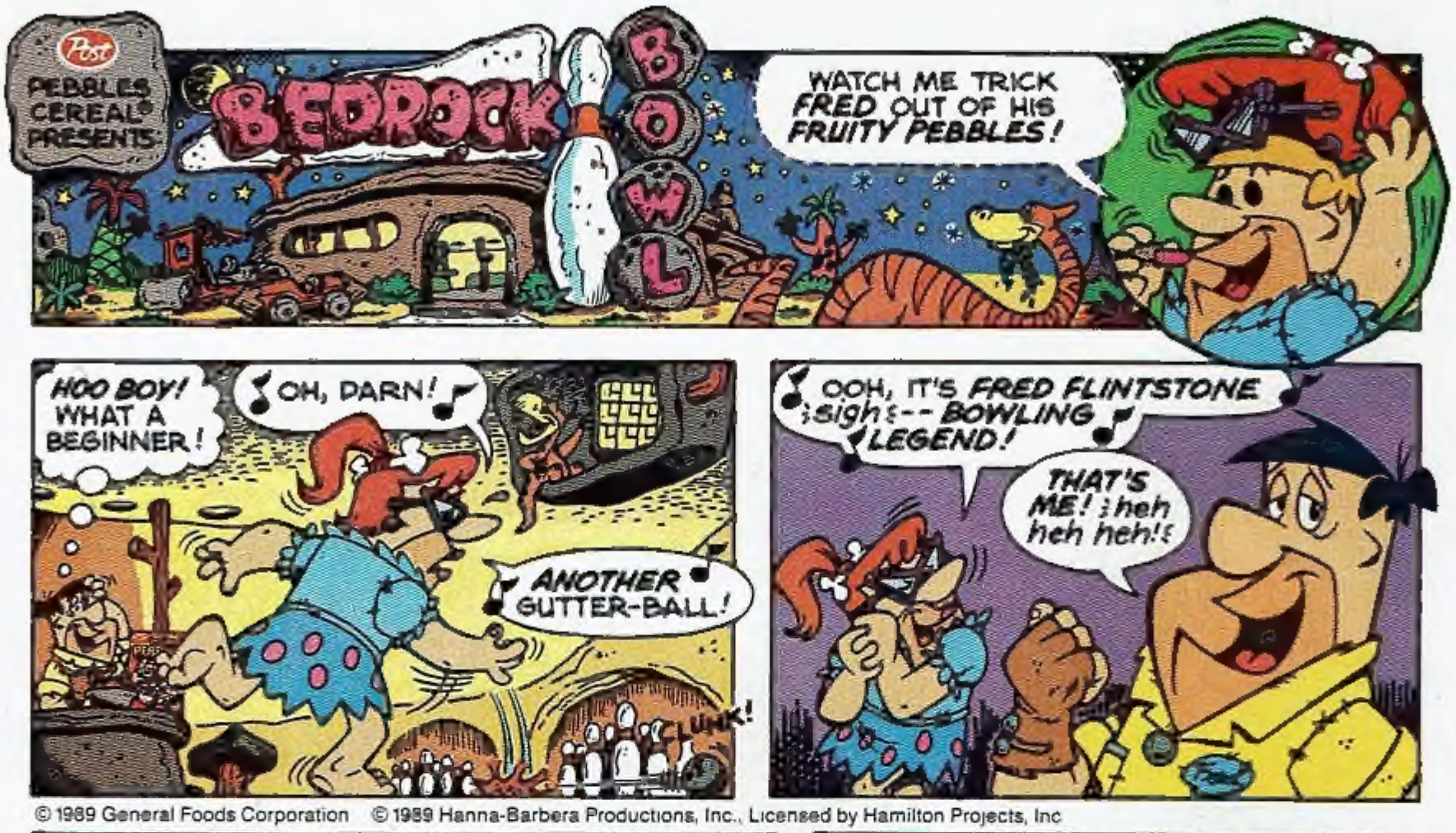

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SWAMP FEVER

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I WAS BORN WILLIAM JACKSON WEST! WILL WAS MY GRAN' PAPPY'S NAME! JACKSON WAS FOR THE PRESIDENT WHO WON THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS! THE REST YOU CAN FIGURE FOR YOURSELF!

I USED TO BE A U.S. ARMY RANGER IN THE DELTA FORCE! NOW I'M A BOUNTY HUNTER! I'VE ALSO DIED TWICE IN MY LIFE!

ONCE WAS IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN WEST BEIRUT! THE OTHER WAS BY SWAMP GAS CHARLIE GASKILL, A HITMAN HIRED BY THE GORDON CRIME FAMILY TO WASTE ME!

I WAS REVIVED BOTH TIMES, BROUGHT BACK FROM THE DEAD! THERE'S A LOCAL LEGEND 'ROUND HERE SAYS I CAN'T BE KILLED! IT MIGHT BE RIGHT! MAYBE YOU HEARD IT YOURSELF...

THE LEGEND OF BAYOU BILLY™

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NEW ORLEANS...

THE BIG EASY, THE CRESCENT CITY...

THE CITY THAT CARE FORGOT...

RIGHT NOW, I'D CALL IT ANOTHER NAME...

...A CITY UNDER SIEGE!

WE'VE GOT THE PLACE SURROUNDED, SHERIFF!

GOOD! THIS TIME, BLACKIE BLUE AIN'T GETTIN' AWAY SO EASY-LIKE!

BANG!

LOOK OUT! HERE HE COMES!

BRAT-TATTA-TAT

BAM!

BLAM!

LET 'YM HAVE IT!

GEEZ! HE'S COMIN' RIGHT FOR US! HE'S--!

TAKKA-TAKKA-TAKKA

BAM!

KA-CHOW!

BLAM!

YOW--! TH' SUCKUH BIT ME!!

HOLD YOUR FIRE! HOLD YOUR FIRE--!!

SOMEBODY STOP HIM!

YOU STOP HIM!

HE'S ALL OVER US-- LIKE A CHEAP SUIT!

EEE-YOOORR?

SHERIFF

S-SAINTS PRE-PREGERVE M-ME!

AAAAARRGH!

N-NO! NO--!!

SKRUNCH!

GAAA--!!

NYAAARGHH!

!?

EY! HE'S GETTING AWAY!

STOP HIM-- FAST!

HOW!

SPLANG!

I AIN'T NEVER SEEN A MAN JUMP LIKE THAT!

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK BLACKIE BLUE'S A MAN?!

THUNK

DUMPSTER DAN SEZ: "Put litter in its place!"

POW!

KER-BLANG!

I CAN HEAR THE RUCKUS FOUR BLOCKS AWAY! I GO THERE, FIGURE MAYBE THE POLICE CAN USE A HAND!

HEY, SHERIFF! WHERE Y'AT?

I'M NECK-DEEP IN GARBAGE, BILLY! THAT'S WHERE I'M AT!

I HELP THE SHERIFF OUT OF THE DUMPSTER! HE'S SEEN BETTER DAYS!

GET ME OUTTA THIS!

SMELLED BETTER, TOO!

I NEED YOU TO BRING IN BLACKIE BLUE, RIGHT QUICK!

THERE'S A $25,000 REE-WARD FOR HIM!

I DON'T WANT THE ASSIGNMENT, BUT TAKE IT ANYWAY!

I CAN USE THE MONEY!

I'LL PUT TRACKER, BROADSIDE AND SURESHOT ON IT!

WHY YORE TEAM AND NOT YOU?

'CAUSE I'M BUSY!

WHAT YOU GOT ON, HIM?

A WHOLE FILE!

HERE, **TAKE** IT! IT MAKES RIGHT INTERESTIN' **READING**, IT DOES!

NOW, YOU MIND TELLIN' ME **WHY** BLACKIE BLUE DON'T **RATE** YORE TENDER **TOUCH**?

Y'SEE, FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, SHERIFF... ...I'M GONNA BE HUNTING DOWN THE **MAN** WHO ONCE **MURDERED** ME!

THE SHERIFF DOESN'T **UNDERSTAND**! I DIDN'T **EXPECT** HIM TO!

E-EX-EXCUSE ME, SIR! B-BUT THERE'S A **BANANA PEEL** ON YOUR **HEAD**!

TAP TAP TAP

I KNOW THERE'S A **STINKIN' BANANA PEEL** ON MY **HEAD**, DEPUTY!

SLAP!

WHAT'S YORE **NAME**, BOY

WHAT? **WHAT?!**

WHAT?!!

THE BOYS'RE OVER AT **GREASE MONKEY'S** GARAGE, HELPING HER BUILD A NEW **MONSTER TRUCK**!

I GIVE THEM A CALL!

TH' GIANT **AUGER** SHOULD BE **RETRACTABLE**!

THAT WAY, WE CAN USE THE **CAB** FOR DRILLING **OR** RAMMING!

YUP.

I'LL **GET** IT!

RRRINNG!

AL'S GARAGE AND TOWING! **ALEXANDRA LA ROCHELLE** SPEAKING!

ALEX? LISTEN UP, **GREASE**! SEND THE **TEAM** OVER NEAR THE GREENWOOD CEMETERY, BY CITY PARK!

THEY'RE GOING AFTER SOMEONE NAMED **BLACKIE BLUE**! PUT **TRACKER** ON HIS **TRAIL**--WHILE IT'S **FRESH**!

WHERE'LL YOU BE?

ON THE OTHER-SIDE OF THE RIVER, IN ALGIERS!

RAISING CAIN NO DOUBT!

OH, NO DOUBT 'BOUT IT, SUGAR!

ALGIERS! IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, IT'S THE KIND OF PLACE THAT'LL CHEW YOU UP AND SPIT YOU OUT BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!

I'M NOT AFRAID OF ALGIERS!

ALGIERS SHOULD BE AFRAID OF ME!

IT'S NOT HARD LOCATING "THE HIGH NOTE"!

♪ The HIGH NOTE ♪

...AND STAY OUT!!

:WHC:

IT'S THE BIGGEST DIVE ON THE BLOCK!

I GO IN.

I FIND WHO I'M LOOKIN' FOR.

I SIT.

WE TALK.

I DON'T SEEM TO 'MEMBER ASKIN' YOU TO JOIN ME, MISTER!

YOU DIDN'T.

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM!

:SNORT: NO. SHOULD I--?

IT'D MAKE THINGS A LOT EASIER!

GORDON ARMAMENTS HAS BEEN RECEIVING SHIPMENTS OF CERTAIN CHEMICALS! SOME OF THOSE CHEMICALS ARE BEIN' DIVERTED TO SWAMP GAS CHARLIE!

SO?

SO, YOUR BROTHER'S THE *DRIVER*! I WANT CHARLIE GASKILL'S *ADDRESS*!

MISTER, THERE'S ONLY *ONE* WAY YOU'RE GONNA *GET* IT!

SHOVE!

LET'S GO IN THE ALLEY AND DISCUSS IT!

SNAP

KRAK

IF YOU *INSIST*!

I ALLOW MYSELF TO BE ESCORTED *OUTSIDE*!

C'MON, *RUNT*! MOVE!

YOU'RE *SURE* YOU DON'T KNOW *WHO* I AM?

POS'TIVE!

POW! BAM!

TOK!

KLUNK BAM!

BIFF!

WARP! PHTHUMP!

KEE-RUNCH!

A **MINUTE** LATER, I HAVE MY ADDRESS!

DUST! DUST! DUST!

I **THINK** HE KNOWS WHO I *AM*, NOW!

MEANWHILE...

IT'S *IN* THERE!

YOU'RE **DEAD** CERTAIN, TRACKER?

CRESCENT MOON BOARDING HOUSE

WHAT'S HE MEAN, *IT*?

I CAN *SMELL* THE THING! IT'S *UPSTAIRS*, HERE!

BROADSIDE! WHAT'S HE MEAN, *THING*?

MEANS KEEP YOUR *ARROWS* READY!

6

CONTINUED

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PLEASE NOTE: ALL CANADIAN ORDERS MUST BE PAYABLE IN U.S. CURRENCY, OR BY INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDER. PLEASE ALLOW 6 TO 10 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.

SHHH! THE CREATURE'S INSIDE!

WHAT DOES HE MEAN, CREATURE?

CORK IT, SURESHOT!

YOU'RE MAKIN' ME JUMPY!

I'M MAKIN' YOU JUMPY?

GIMME A BREAK!

K-K-KREAK!

WELL ROOM'S ...TY! NOBOD...'S HOME!

LET'S GO!

NO WAIT!

THE THING IS HIDING IN THE CLOSEST!

YEAH! AND THE BOOGEYMAN'S UNDER THE BED!

NOBODY HIDES IN THE CLOSET, NOWADAYS! I'LL PROVE IT!

SURESHOT! DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR!

NYARGH!

HOMINA HOMINA HOMINA!!!

I TOLD YOU, DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR!

QUICK! YOUR NET!

BROADSIDE!

WAY AHEAD OF YOU, TRACKER!

HAH! BAGGED 'IM?

ERGH?

GGGRRRR...

RIP-P-P-P-P-P-P

ROARALR!

IT... IT *RIPPED* ITSELF *FREE!!!*

NO WAY! THAT *NET* KIN HOLD A WILD *PANTHER!*

I *MADE* IT M'SELF!

SHEESH! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

SURESHOT! WATCHA *WAITIN'* FOR? *SHOOT IT--!!!*

I'LL *WING* 'IM!

THAT OUGHTA *SLOW* 'IM *DOWN!*

ZIPPP

TWANG!

WHAT THE--?!

H-HE'S PLUCKIN' MY *SHAFTS* RIGHT OUTTA THE *AIR--!*

FAK!

TWANG

JUST OUR *LUCK!* WE'RE UP AGAINST AN *ADULT MUTANT NINJA WEREWOLF!*

I AIN'T NEVER *SAW* ANYTHIN' LIKE *THAT* BEFORE!

STAND *BACK!*

NYARRL!!

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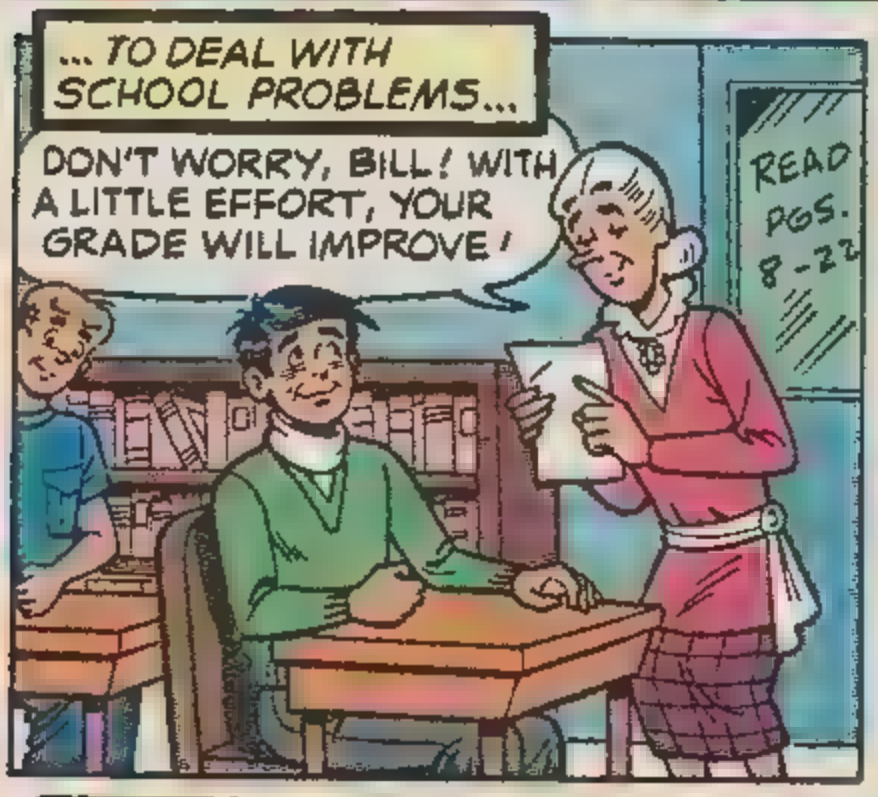

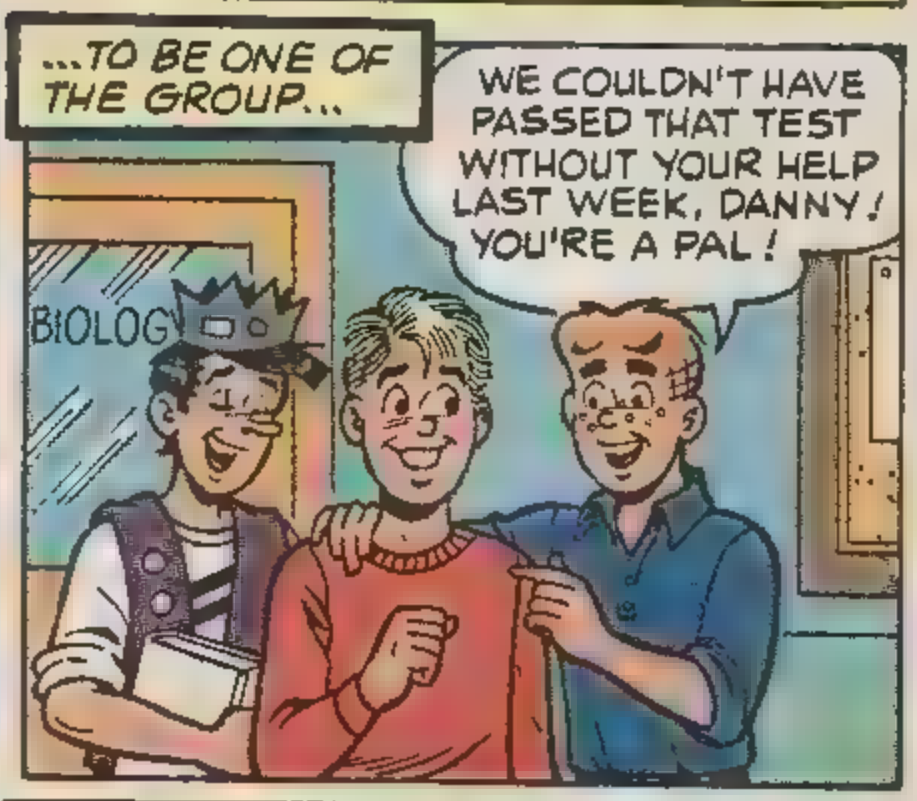

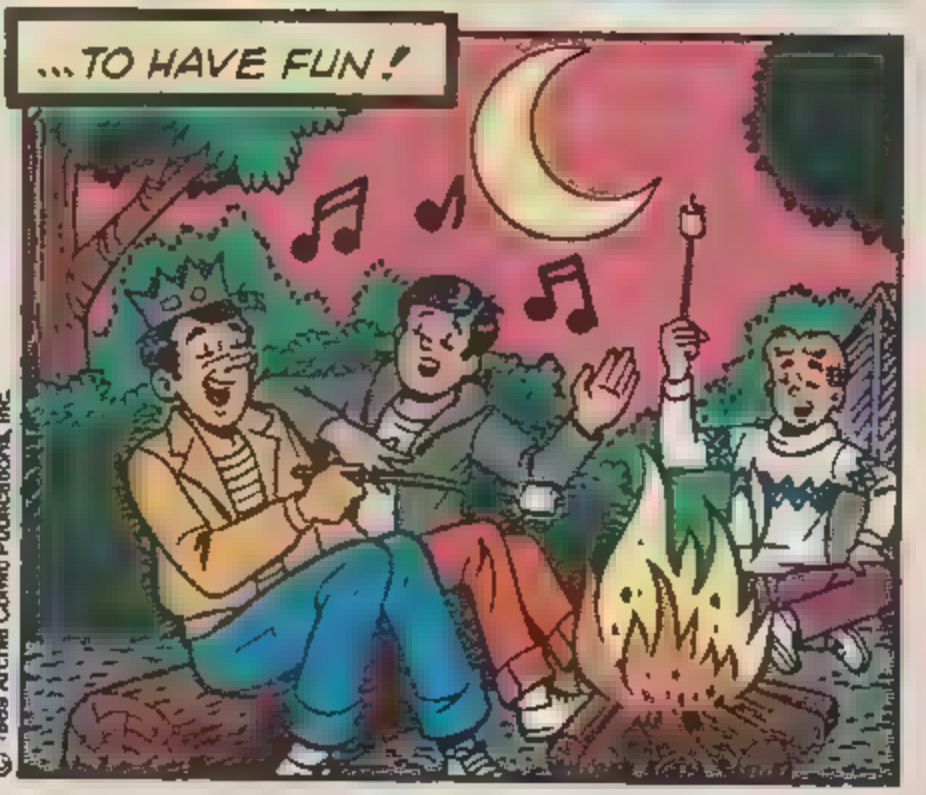

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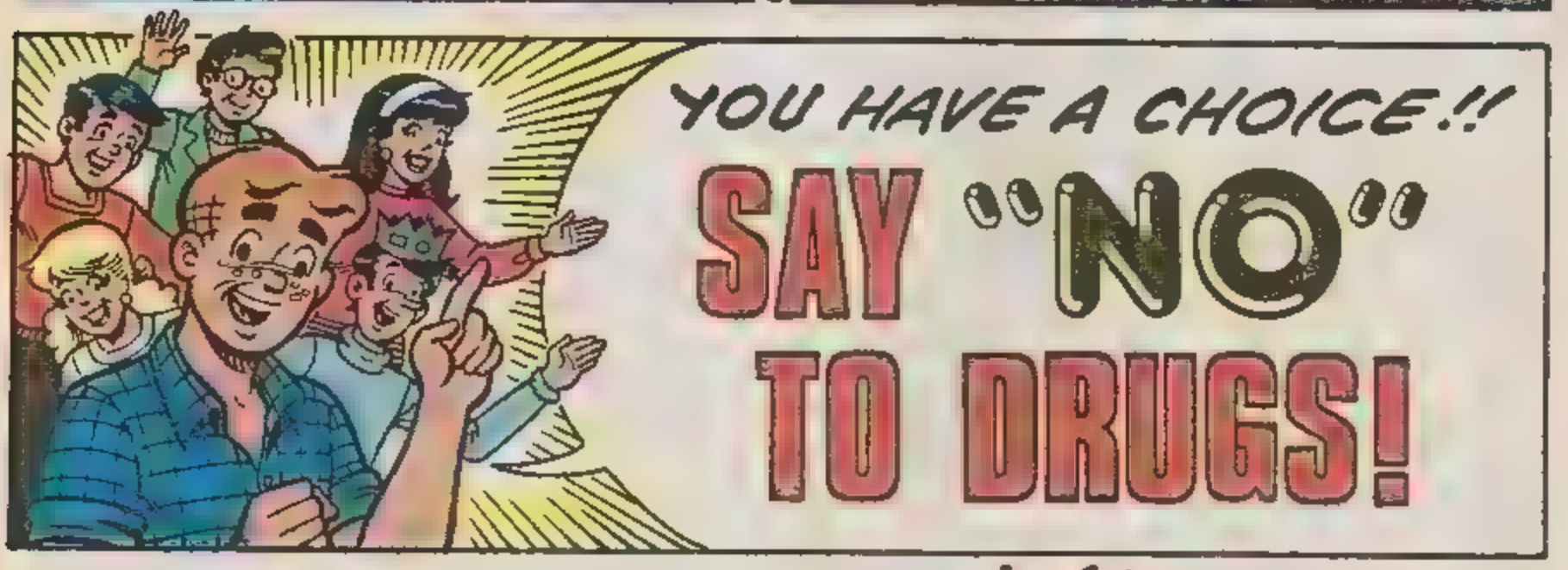


A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM Archie® COMICS

I... STOP IT!

YOU DO THAT TRACKER!

YEAH! MAYBE IT'S ALLERGIC TO WOOD!

TUNK!

SMACK!!

BOK

EEE-OOOoooo!!

MY OAK STAFF...!

KEEP IT DOWN UP THERE!

I'M TRYIN' TO WATCH JEOPARDY!!

TAKE FUNNY BOOK TRIVIA FOR TWO HUNDRED

SNAPP!

UH...

..OH

GROARR!

KER-SMASHH!

ON MY WAY TO SWAMP GAS CHARLIE'S, I PICK UP SOMETHING ON MY POLICE SCANNER!

I CAN HEAR THE RUMPUS TWO BLOCKS AWAY!

I KNOW THE BOYS'VE FOUND THEIR MAN!

OR RATHER, HE FINDS ME!

THE HARD WAY!

KAWHUMP

GEEZ LOUISE--!!

Y'KNOW HOW A CARTOON CHARACTER, AFTER TAKING A BIG FALL, SHAKES HIS HEAD TO PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER?

THAT'S WHAT BLACKIE BLUE REMINDS ME OF!

ONLY BLACKIE BLUE'S NO CARTOON CHARACTER!

!

NOT HUMAN, EITHER!

DON'T KNOW WHAT HE IS!

DON'T MUCH CARE!

I DROP THE BILLY-MOBILE INTO REVERSE AND FLOOR IT!

BLACKIE GETS CAUGHT OFF BALANCE!

SKREEEECH!

SO FAR, SO GOOD!

BLUE GETS TO HIS FEET!

VROOOOMM!

I SLAM MY ATV 4x4 INTO FIRST AND PUNCH IT!

I'M STILL ACCELERATING WHEN I HIT HIM, SEND HIM FLYING THIRTY FEET!

CHUDD!

SOMETHING TELLS ME IT'S GONNA TAKE MORE 'N A LOVE TAP TO KEEP HIM DOWN FOR THE COUNT!

BEFORE I CAN GET THE CUFFS ON HIM, HE'S ALREADY COMING TO!

GRRRRRR!!!

AND HE'S MAD!

IF I DON'T ACT FAST, I'M IN DEEP YOGURT!

I REACH INS DE MY BAG O' TRICKS ON MY ROPE BELT, BLIND HIM WITH A BURST OF FLASH-POWDER!

HEADS UP, BRIGHT EYES!

ROARL!

IT'S THE BEST I CAN COME UP WITH ON SHORT NOTICE!

BUT IT GETS THE JOB DONE!

WOUF!

HE GIVES ME A PARTING SHOT AS HE RUNS OFF!

THE TEAM RUSHES OUTSIDE! THEY EXPECT TO FIND BLACKIE BLUE SPLAT IN THE STREET!

THEY FIND ME INSTEAD!

B LLY! WHAT HAPPENED?!

IT'S A LONG STORY!

MEET ME BACK AT THE HOUSE!

WE'LL COMPARE NOTES LATER!

BLACKIE BLUE [illegible] ON THE BACK BURNER!

I'VE STILL GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH SWAMP GAS CHARLIE!

THERE'S AN OLD FARM HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN!

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE CHARLIE GASKILL'S HIDE OUT!

I OPEN THE UNLOCKED DOOR AND ENTER!

IN THE FRIDGE I FIND A BOTTLE OF MAYONNAISE AND A QUART OF SOUR MILK

NOBODY LIVES HERE!

I DECIDE TO CHECK OUT THE BACK YARD!

PHEW! PAY DIRT!

AN OLD CHICKEN COOP'S BEEN CONVERTED INTO A MAKE-SHIFT LAB!

BUT EVERY-THING'S SHUT DOWN COLD

IT'S OBVIOUS CHARLIE ONLY WORKS NIGHTS!

I'M DONE PLAYING DETECTIVE FOR NOW! I GIVE MY GIRL CALL!

LO CHÉRIE! WHERE [illegible]?

HI BILLY! I WAS JUST LEAVING GOING OUT THE DOOR

OH, I'D LOVE TO SEE YOUR NEW HOME!

PICK ME UP AT MY PLACE IN -ALF AN HOUR

BYE BYE!

I'M ON TME! ANNIE ISN'T! WHILE I'M WAITING, I GO THROUGH BLACKE'S FILE!

I DON'T LIKE WHAT I SEE!

FROM THE NOTES OF DR HANS MANNHEIM...

I AIN'T NEVER GONNA FRY, VINNIE! I FIGURED OUT HOW!

GOOD FER YOU, BLACKIE! BUT YA NEVER TOLD ME... WHAT MADE YOU BLUE?

"I REQUIRE A HUMAN VOLUNTEER TO TEST A RADICAL NEW MEDICAL PROCEDURE!"

I WAS BEIN' CHASED UP NORTH BY A COSTUMED CRIMEFIGHTER!

ME AN' ANOTHER CON SWAM THROUGH A POOL OF CHEMICALS TRYIN' TO ESCAPE!

"I HAVE STUMBLED UPON A WILLING PROSPECT INCARCERATED IN A STATE PENAL INSTITUTION!"

HIS SKIN GOT DYED WHITE, TURNING HIM INTO A LAUGHING LUNATIC!

BUT THE JOKE WAS ON ME!

I GOT COLORED BLUE AND EXTRADITED TO LOUISIANA ON A MURDER RAP!

"HE IS A CONVICTED KILLER ON DEATH ROW!"

BUT I AIN'T GOIN' TO THE CHAIR!

I'M GONNA BE A GUINEA PIG FOR DOC MANNHEIM'S EXPERIMENTS!

"HIS NICKNAME IS BLACKIE BLUE!"

THAT BUTCHER--?

I'D RATHER GO TO THE CHA'R : SHUDDER: THAN LET HIM GET HIS MEAT HOOKS ON ME!

ARE YOU READY, BLACKIE?

"HE AWAITED ME EAGERLY, ALMOST JOYOUSLY!"

'BOUT TIME YOU GOT HERE, DOC!

OPEN THE CELL, PLEASE, GUARDS!

"ALL HE COULD TALK ABOUT WAS THE IMPENDING SERIES OF GENETIC EXPERIMENTS!"

DON'T FORGET OUR DEAL, DOC!

MY SENTENCE GETS REDUCED TO LIFE FOR THIS!

I SHAN'T FORGET, BLACKIE!

I PROMISE YOU!

"IN THE PRISON LAB, HE WAS MOST WILLING TO COOPERATE!"

GUARDS, PLACE HIM ON THE EXAMINATION TABLE!

FASTEN THE RESTRAINTS TIGHT, PLEASE!

R-RE-RESTRAINTS?!

AIN'TCHA GONNA PUT ME UNDER OR ANYTHING, DOC?!

"IN FACT THE SUBJECT EXPRESSED AN AVID INTEREST IN THE EXPERIMENT!"

RELAX, BLACKIE!

IT'S FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION!

THE HYPODERMIC IS READY, DR. MANNHEIM!

HYPODERMIC?

WHAT HYPODERMIC?!

"I DESIGNED A SPECIAL HYPODERMIC DEVICE FOR ADMINISTERING MY EXPERIMENTAL SERUM!"

IT CONTAINS A RECOMBINANT RNA MEMORY SERUM!

WHEN YOUR CELLS DIE, YOUR BODY SHALL "REMEMBER" WHAT THEY WERE ... AND INSTANTLY REGENERATE THEM!

YOU'LL BE INDESTRUCTIBLE! PERHAPS EVEN...

DARE I SAY IT? IMMORTAL!

"NEEDLESS TO RECOUNT, HIS ENTHUSIASM TO CONTINUE WAS IMMEASURABLE!"

I-I'LL NEVER DIE? BUT... ...BUT I'VE TRADED FOR A LIFE SENTENCE!

I'LL ROT IN HERE FOREVER--!!

A LOCK OF BLACKIE'S HAIR CROSSED HIS FEATURES. THE SERUM HAD ENDED HIS LIFE.

COME, COME BLACKIE!

THINK OF THE CONTRIBUTION YOU'LL BE MAKING TO PURE SCIENCE!

I'VE CHANGED MY MIND! I WANT OUT OF THIS!

NO! DON'T--!

THEN SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG! THE SERUM HAD SOMEHOW ALTERED BLACKIE'S BRAIN CELLS BIZARRELY. AFFECTED THE EXPERIMENT."

:GASP:

I...

BLACKIE BEGAN AN AMAZING TRANSFORMATION.

...WANT...

OH, GOSH..."

THUD

THUD

THE TEST SUBJECT WAS NO LONGER COMPLETELY HUMAN!

...OUT!

KRASHH!

HE LEAPED OUT THROUGH A WINDOW REINFORCED WITH METAL MESH.

GUARDS!

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE HE WAS GONE!

INFORM THE WARDEN! TELL HIM WE'VE ENCOUNTERED A SLIGHT PROBLEM!

PLEASE EXCUSE SOMETHING I ATE TO REVISE ME!

DOCTOR! THE SERUM WAS RECOMBINANT! BUT RECOMBINANT WITH WHAT?!

THE MEMORY RNA WAS SPLICED WITH THE GENES OF A FERRET!

GOOD LORD! WE'VE CREATED A MONSTER!

ON THE CONTRARY MY DEAR

I AM FATHER TO... A MIRACLE!

BLACKIE BLUE USED TO LIVE IN NEW ORLEANS! THE POLICE HOUNDED HIM BACK HERE!

HOPE I HAVEN'T KEPT YOU WAITING LONG, BILLY!

I MAKE A MENTAL NOTE TO RUN DOWN HIS OLD HANGOUTS TOMORROW!

MY MENTAL NOTE NEVER GETS FILED! ANNABEL FINALLY SHOWS!

SHE'S WORTH THE WAIT!

I THINK THE FRENCH HAVE A WORD FOR IT!

OOO-LA-LA!

LIKE IT?

I LOVE IT!! MMM-MMMM...!

LIKE IT?

YOU TALKING ABOUT ME OR MY NEW LOOK?

BOTH!

I GOT TIRED OF GETTING SWAMP GOO ON MY GOOD CLOTHES, SO I DRESSED DOWN FOR ONCE AND...!

ER, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WINDSHIELD?

I RAN INTO SOMEBODY WHO TOOK IT PERSONAL!

THE SUN'S GOING DOWN WHEN WE FINALLY ARRIVE!

THE GORDON CRIME FAMILY BLEW UP MY OLD HOUSE!

I CHARGED 'EM TRIPLE DAMAGES --PLUS INTEREST!

BILLY! IT... IT'S BREATH-TAKING!

WAIT'LL YOU SEE THE FRILLS I'VE ADDED, CHERIE!

A MOTOR LAUNCH, A MARSH BOAT, A JET-SK -- BUT LET'S GO INSIDE!

ME AND THE TEAM HAVE TO TALK BUSINESS!

ABOUT THE SOMEBODY WHO TOOK IT PERSONAL YOU RAN INTO?!

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING! DIDN'T HAVE TO!

ANN'E KNOWS ME TOO WELL!

I'LL WARM UP A POT OF CHICKORY COFFEE!

OH HOW CUTE! I DIDN'T REALIZE BILLY WENT IN FOR COLLECTING ART!

ART-SHMART ANN!

BROADS DE USES 'EM AS SNARES! THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE!

STRANGERS CAN'T RESIST TAKIN A POKE AT EM SETTIN OFF TRIP FLARES!

AND THEY ACTUALLY WORK?

ASK TRACKER! FIRST TIME HE SAW ONE, HE TRIPPED IT!

BEAT ON IT WITH HIS STICK, HE DID!

MUMBLE-GRUMBLE

AND WHO'S THAT A PICTURE OF?

THAT'S LAURIE, BILLY'S WIFE!

HIS ... WIFE?!?

Abie

IT'S GOOD 'N *HOT!* WHO WANTS A--?

YOU NEVER SAID YOU WERE *MARRIED!!*

SLAP!

SOMEBODY *TOLD* YOU 'BOUT *LAURIE?*

MY *FAULT,* BILLY! I THOUGHT SHE *KNEW!*

WELL, I DIDN'T!

WHY DON'T YOU *TELL* ME ALL ABOUT *MRS. WEST!*

I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT FROM YOUR OWN *LIPS!*

IT'S *TRUE,* ANNIE! LAURIE IS MY *WIFE!*

SHE DIED 'BOUT TWO YEARS AGO! THE GORDONS PUT OUT A *CONTRACT* ON ME!

THEY GOT *HER* INSTEAD!

:GASP:

BILLY!

I'M... I'M SO *SORRY!*

DON'T BE! SOONER OR LATER, I'LL FIND OUT *WHICH* GORDON ORDERED THE *HIT!*

AND WHEN I *DO,* IT WON'T BE *PRETTY,* I *PROMISE* YOU!

HOW CAN YOU BE *CERTAIN* IT WAS *ONE* OF *THEM?*

I'D BET MY *LIFE* ON IT!

MY *GRUDGE* WITH THAT FAMILY GOES WAY BACK!

ING, AND GAMBLING OPERATIONS'

TRADING AND MONEY

GREASED AS A FAMILY FAVOR TO ROCK'

"HEY EACH HAD A *MOTIVE*! I JUST GOT TO FIGURE OUT WHICH ONE'S *GUILTY*!

AND WHEN I DO...'

PROSECUTE

NO ANNE! YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND*! THIS'S *BETWEEN* ME AN' LAURE SKILLER'

WRONG'

I DO UNDERSTAND. BUT IF YOU GO AFTER ANY OF THE GORDONS ON YOUR OWN...

...HEAVEN HELP ME, AS MUCH AS I CARE ABOUT YOU I'LL PRESS CHARGES AGAINST YOU MYSELF!

I THINK SHE MEANS IT, BILLY!

I'LL SAY THIS YOUR CHER'S GOT SPUNK!

!!

TRACKER'S HALF CHOCTAW INDIAN! HE SUDDENLY GOES WERE ON US!

I'VE SEEN HIM DO IT DOZENS OF TIMES!

I'LL NEVER GET USED TO IT!

TROUBLE, TRACK?

YUP! COMPANY'S COMING! FROM THE OPPOSITE BANK!

PART OF MY HOUSE IS OVER THE WATER! WE RACE OUT ONTO THE DECK!

IT'S PAST SUNDOWN! CAN'T SEE A THING...!

SHOT! HIT THE FLOODS!

CHECK!

THE FLOODLIGHTS SNAP ON! THEY SHOW ME A NIGHTMARE!

SLOOSH

HYAH!

BLACKIE BLUE ERUPTS FROM THE RIVER LIKE A STEEL COILED SPRING!

HE REACHES OUT AND GRABS ME, JUST LIKE THAT!

MY REFLEXES ARE FAST!

HIS ARE FASTER!

NEXT I KNOW I'M IN THE WATER!

SPA-BOOSH!

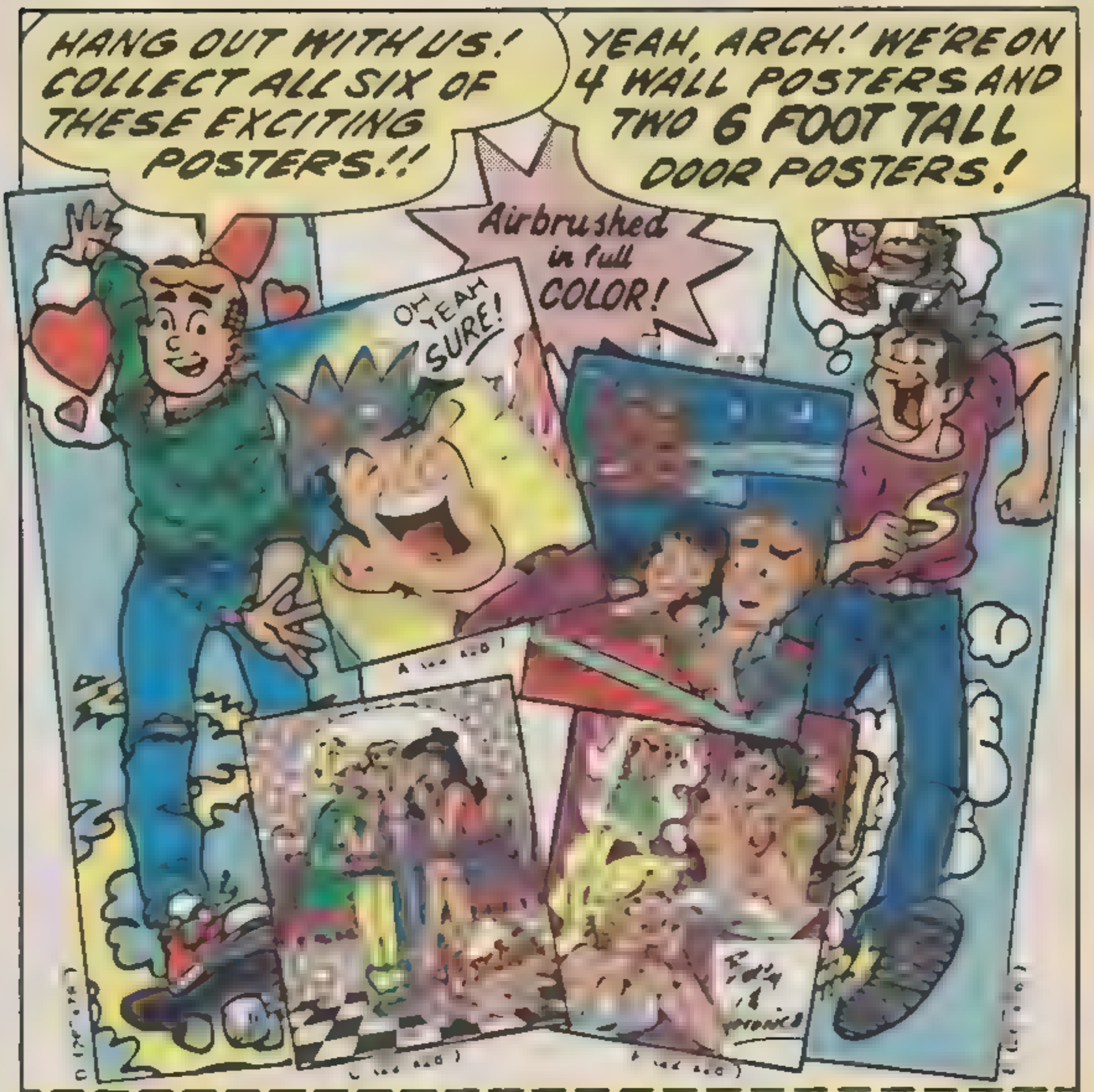
BLACKIE IS BUSY CHOKIN' THE AIR OUTTA ME!

INSTANTLY I GO FOR MY KNIFE!

I DON'T HAVE IT!

I LEFT IT PLANTED IN MY COFFEE TABLE!

CONTINUED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THERE'S A CARDINAL RULE I LEARNED IN THE ARMY!

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR WEAPON WITH YOU!

I BROKE THE RULE!

THE PRICE IS GONNA BE MY LIFE!

SOMETHING'S GOT BILLY! IT'S HOLDING HIM UNDER!

THING IS RIGHT. THAT'S BLACKIE BLUE!

QUICK!

WE NEED STEAKS AND CHOPS FROM THE FREEZER!

RAW MEAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND?!

JUST DO IT! HURRY...!

THAT'LL ATTRACT THE HUNGRY 'GATORS!

ALLIGATORS

BUT WHAT ABOUT BILLY?

HE WEARS A SECRET SALVE... KEEPS THE CRITTERS AWAY!

THEY WON'T TOUCH HIM, IN THEORY!

I'M AT THE EDGE OF PASSING OUT WHEN I SEE A FROZEN T-BONE DRIFTING MY WAY!

I START CLUBBING HIM WITH IT!

TALK ABOUT DROWNING MEN CLUTCHING AT STRAWS!

IT'S NO GO!

I'M IN A CHOKE HOLD I CAN'T BREAK!

I'M SINKING FAST!

MY LAST THOUGHT.. AND IT'S A PUN! SOME EPITAPH!

JUST THEN, A GIANT GATER RAMS BLACKIE OFF ME!

IT'S THE SIZE OF A TORPEDO

FA-WHUMP!

MOVIN' FAST AS ONE, TOO!

OTHER GATORS GATHER 'ROUND!

THEY WANT IN ON THE ACTION!

ME, I GOT OTHER THINGS ON MY MIND!

LIKE AIR! I GULP DOWN A COUPLE GALLONS OF IT!

BILLY! TAKE AHOLD! I'LL PULL YOU UP!

THERE'S A ROPE LADDER WAITIN' FOR ME, THANKS TO BROADSIDE!

KOFF KAFF KOFF

I HANG ON! SIDE PUTS HIS BACK INTO IT, I'M ALONG FOR THE RIDE!

I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO SWAT A FLY!

I... I WAS SO WORRIED! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'M ALIVE! :KAFF: THAT'S GOTTA COUNT FOR SOMETHIN', DARLIN'!

THERE'S A BIG SPLASH! THE WATER CHURNS TO FOAM! EVERYONE'S CHEERIN' THE GATORS!

'CEPT ME!

I READ BLACKIE'S FILE!

MY MONEY'S ON HIM!

AND JUST LIKE THAT, IT'S OVER!

A DARK SHAPE LEAVES THE RIVER AND SLINKS INTO THE DARKNESS!

I DON'T NEED A CRYSTAL BALL TO KNOW WHO IT IS!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, TRACK?

THE GATOR'S HURT HIM, BILLY! HURT HIM BAD! BUT--!

BUT?

BUT I'VE A GUT FEELING HE'LL BE BACK!

22

CONTINUED

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I TAKE IT THAT'S THE GUY YOU *HIT* WHO TOOK IT *PERSONAL*?

REAL PERSONAL, SUGAR! IT'S A LONG *STORY*...!

WE TALK ABOUT BLACKIE OVER A POT OF RE-HEATED COFFEE! THEY'RE NOT HAPPY WITH *WHAT* I SAY!

BLACKIE'S HALF ANIMAL-- --*UNKILLABLE*-- AN' NOW HE'S *HUNTIN'* US! 'STEAD OF THE *OTHER* WAY 'ROUND!

I WAS GONNA *BUST* SWAMP GAS CHARLIE! BUT THAT'S *OUT*--WITH *BLUE* RUNNIN' WILD!

ANY *SUGGESTIONS*?

YUP! GET *HIM* BEFORE HE GETS *US*!

GOES *DOUBLE* FOR ME!

I *SECOND* THE *MOTION*!

UH, I'VE AN *IDEA*!

STEP ONE! LAY A FAKE *TRAIL* TO CHARLIE GASKILLS!

STEP TWO: BLACKIE *FOLLOWS* THE TRAIL!

STEP THREE: BLACKIE AND GASKILL *BEAT* THE *STUFFINGS* OUT OF EACH OTHER!

STEP FOUR: BILLY WALKS IN AND *PICKS* UP THE *PIECES*!

STEP FIVE: I GET TREATED TO DINNER WITH THE *REWARD* MONEY!

SIMPLE, *NO*?

!

?

?!

!!

SEE, I TOLD YOU *FELLAS* SHE HAD *BRAINS*!

AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE *CAPTIVATED* BY MY LOOKS!

SMACK!

WELL, *THAT*, TOO...!

I GUESS THE TEAM BROUGHT BACK TO HER PLACE GETS PULLED FOR POLICE PROTECTION, CASE BLACK ESCAPES UP ON HER DOORSTEP.

BE CAREFUL, BILLY!

YOU CHERUB!

FOLLOWING ON I PARK A STONE'S THROW AWAY, I'VE GOT SOCKS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN WASHED IN A MONTH

TO MAKE THAT TWO

ONCE BLUE CATCHES A WHIFF, HE'LL BE ABLE TO FOLLOW MY TRAIL BACK

IF THE STINK DON'T GET ME FIRST!

GOTTA LOVE SWAMP GAS CHARLIE HEARS A BASILISK IS THE ONLY WAY HELL COULD SMELL!

I TIE THE BOAT TO THE BACK OF A BARGE AND SWIM TO THE CHARLIE

SEVERAL LAPS AROUND THE CHICKEN COOP LATER,

I'M GROWN LIKE A FOOL THE WHOLE TIME

IT DOESN'T LIKE THIS I REALLY ENJOY MY WORK

I STASH THE BOAT IN THE WOODS AND CLIMB A TREE!

I SETTLE IN, CHECK MY WATCH, WAITING FOR NIGHTFALL!

THE SUN CR[illegible]

[illegible] ROADSTER

[illegible] SAMP SES

:AHHHH:

CHARLIE ENTERS THE LAB AND FIRES UP HIS TEST TUBES! OFF IN THE DISTANCE, I HEAR FOOTSTEPS!

RUNNIN' FOOTSTEPS!

GET'S LOUDER AN' LOUDER AN' LOUDER!

PITTER-PAT! PITTER-PAT!

[illegible] BLACK [illegible] SAINT!

[illegible] STOP KNOCK!

[illegible] NATCH!

INSIDE, [illegible] CONFUSION

NYAR.!

AHHHHH?

SNASNES [illegible] CLOD BUSTER!

NEITHER IS EXPECTIN' THE OTHER!

[illegible] BLADES BOMBED [illegible] STOPPIN' IN

HE CHARGES [illegible]

GASKILL [illegible] HIS COAT POCKET, SNATCHES HIS GAS GRENADES

[illegible] CLASSIC!

CHARLIE CUTS LOOSE WITH EVERYTHING HE'S PACKIN'!

THERE'S TEAR GAS.' MUSTARD GAS' KNOCKOUT GAS' DELIRIUM GAS! NERVE GAS, EVEN!

WHUMP!

SHH-FOOM!

FOP!

WHOOM!

KA-CHOOM!

BLACKIE'S HAD HIS FILL!

HE GIVES CHARLIE A BACK-HANDED SLAP...

FWAP!

-AHHH..!-

... AND CRASHES OUT THE BACK DOOR WITH A BIG BANG!

KER-BASH!

I'M THERE WAITIN' ON -HIM! OUR EYES LOCK!

HE STARTS COMIN' AT ME!

FOR A SECOND I DON'T THINK THIS IS SUCH A GREAT IDEA...

...BEFORE HE PASSES OUT RIGHT AT MY FEET!

NYRL...*

FUMP!

ONE THING'S FOR SURE!

MAYBE YOU CAN'T KILL BLACKIE BLUE ...BUT YOU CAN GAS HIM UNCONSCIOUS!

I OPEN MY BACK-PACK AN' SLAP HIM IN IRONS!

IN THE LAB, GASKILL IS JUST RECOVERING FROM BLACKIE'S BLOW!

BAYOU BILLY! :AHHH:

SO YOU'RE BEHIND THIS!!

I MAKE SURE HIS RECOVERY IS A LONG, SLOW ONE!

WOP

LIFE'S JUST FULL OF LITTLE SURPRISES, AIN'T IT, CHARLIE?

ON THE WAY INTO TOWN, THEY BOTH COME TO!

THEY'RE NOT PLEASED WITH THE SEATING ARRANGEMENTS!

BILLY! KEEP YOUR :AHHHH: PET AWAY FROM ME!

GRRR RRRRR!

DON'T RILE HIM, SWAMP GAS! HE HASN'T HAD HIS SHOTS YET!

LORDY, BUT I DO LOVE MY WORK...!

EPILOGUE: THE TRIAL OF SWAP GAS CHARLIE...

HOW DOES THE DEFENDANT PLEAD?

NOT :AHHHH: GUILTY!

WILL THE PROSECUTION EXPLAIN WHY THE ACCUSED IS WEARING A MASK?!

MEDICAL REASONS, SIR! DUE TO A RESPIRATORY CONDITION, HE CAN ONLY BREATHE FILTERED OXYGEN!

STATE OF LOUISIANA UNION JUSTICE CONFIDENCE

VERY WELL! PROCEED!

MR. GASKILL, IT'S CLAIMED YOU CONSTRUCT DANGEROUS GAS GRENADES! IS THIS ONE OF THEM?

OBJECTION! THE DEFENDANT SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED NEAR HIS WEAPONS!

YOUR HONOR, CHEMICAL ANALYSIS PROVES THIS SMOKE BOMB IS COMPLETELY HARMLESS AND... EH?

VERY HARMESS! :AHHHH:

ALLOW ME TO :AHHH: DEMONSTRATE!

POOOOOF!

KOFF! HACK! :WHEEZE: GAG! KAFF!

DRAT! HE GOT AWAY!!

BUT THE PRICE ON HIS HEAD JUST WENT UP DARLIN'!

DON'T THINK OF HIM AS AN ESCAPED FELON! THINK OF HIM MORE LIKE... JOB SECURITY!

END

NEXT ISSUE: BAYOU BILLY BEGINS A SPECIAL QUEST! AND JUST WHO IS THUGS "TWO-HEAD" McGRAW?! Keep sending your letters to: SWAMP SAYIN'S c/o ARCHIE COMICS 325 Fayette Ave., Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543

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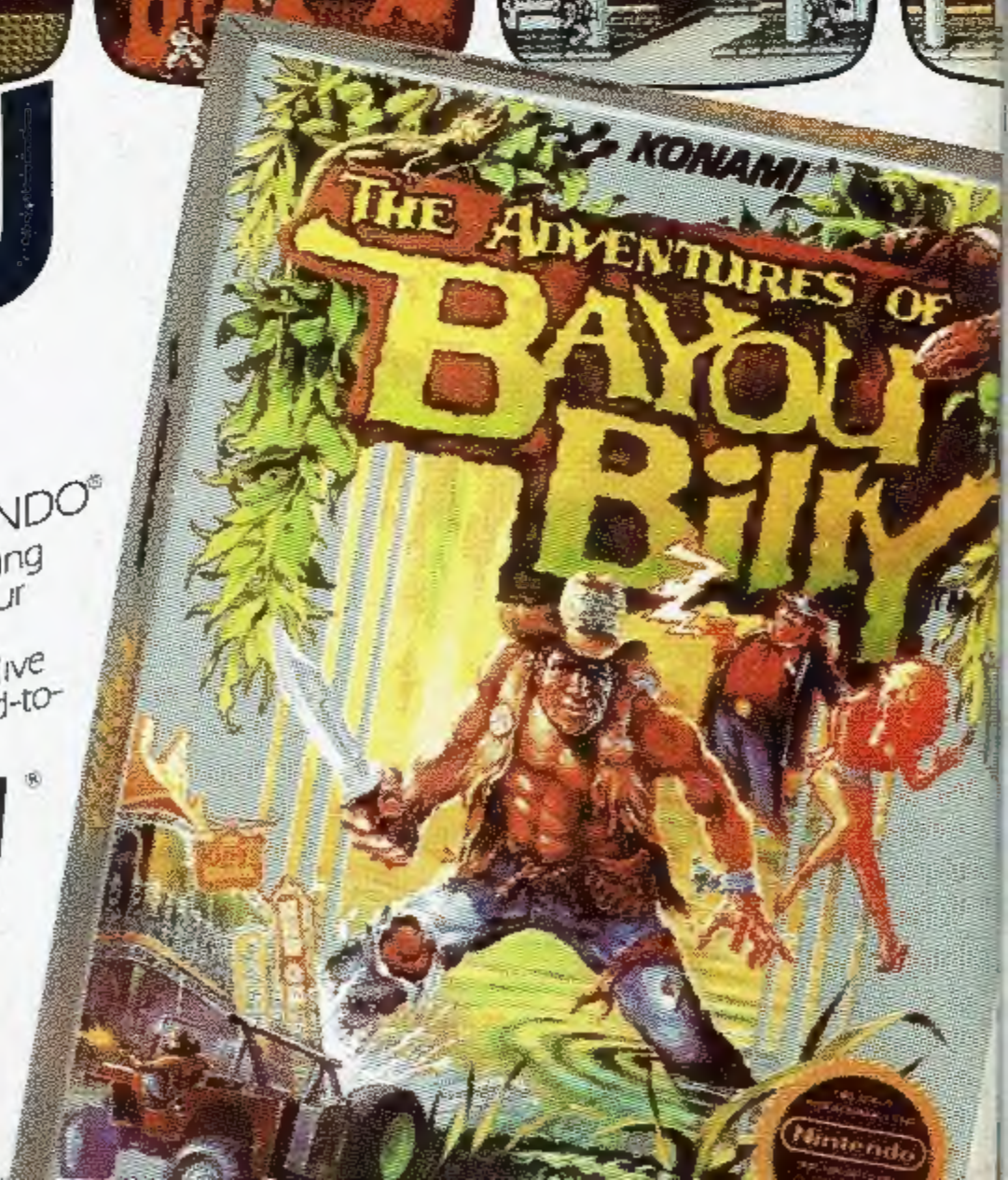
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